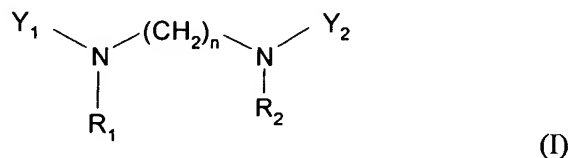


Abstract

The use of carbohydrate-based surfactant compounds having the general formula (I):



wherein Y_1 and Y_2 , which may be the same or different, are carbohydrate groups;

R_1 and R_2 , which may be the same or different, are selected from:

- a) hydrogen;
- b) $C_{(1-24)}$ alkyl group;
- c) $C_{(1-24)}$ alkyl carboxy group; or
- d) a carbon chain of 2 to 24 carbon atoms having one or more carbon/carbon

double bonds,

and n is from 1 to 10;

for facilitating the transfer of DNA or RNA polynucleotides, or analogs thereof, into a eukaryotic or prokaryotic cell *in vivo* or *in vitro*.

New carbohydrate-based surfactant compounds are also disclosed.